

Westdale News
Back to School Edition
August 2014

Westdale Families,

Welcome to those of you who are new to Westdale and welcome back to those of you who are returning.

Our first day of school is Tuesday, September 2nd. Over the summer we have had some changes to our staff. Mrs. Merrick has retired and Mrs. Moeller is now teaching 2nd grade at Hemmeter. Our team at Westdale for 2014-15 school year is: Young Fives-Mrs. Watz, Kindergarten-Mrs. Keith, Mrs. Romain, Mrs. Jones-Torres, and Miss Watt, First Grade-Mrs. Hartwick, Mrs. Kowalski, Mrs. Clarey, and Ms. Sala, Second Grade-Mrs. Carlisle, Mrs. Goidosik, Mrs. Mikoleizik, and Mrs. Miller, Physical Education-Mrs. Bordeaux, Music-Mrs. Casler, Art-Miss Mulford, and Special Services-Mrs. Loeffler and Mrs. Smith.

Back to school is such an exciting time. With that excitement and change come many questions about procedures, schedules, etc. It is my hope that this newsletter addresses these for you and your child. Please don't hesitate to call if something was not covered.

We have our Open House/Curriculum Night on Tuesday, August 26th:

2nd Grade: 5:00-5:45

1st Grade: 5:45-6:30

Young Fives and Kindergarten: 6:30-7:15

This will give your child a chance to meet their teacher, see their classroom, find their locker, walk through the building and drop off any school supplies before the first day of school. The last 25 minutes of each session will be for parents to learn about what to expect for that school year from your child's teacher.

On behalf of the team here at Westdale, welcome to a new school year! If we can be of any assistance, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Karen Volk

Arrival Times

Students participating in the Before School Program and Breakfast Program can arrive no earlier than **7:10 a.m.** Students in these programs should enter in the doors at the north end of the building and go directly to the gym.

Those students not participating in the Breakfast Program or Before School Program should arrive no earlier than 7:30 a.m. Drop off for these students is at the main entrance. Students will enter the building and may sit in their assigned area (Y5 students on the ledge in front of their classroom, kindergarten students in the kindergarten hallway, first and second grade students in the first and second grade hallway).

Entering the Building

Starting the first day of school, the exterior doors will be locked at 7:45 until 2:35, the end of the school day. Access into the school will be allowed only through the main office. Once the school day begins parents are not allowed to interrupt class unless previous arrangements have been made with the teacher.

Breakfast and Lunch

The breakfast and lunch program will start the first day of school. Breakfast costs **\$1.35**. Prices have increased this year. Lunch will be **\$1.75**. A la carte milk is **\$.60**. The menus are posted on www.stcs.org and the September menu will be sent home the first day of school. The menu for the first day of school breakfast is pancake and sausage on a stick. The first day of school lunch is pizza.

Parents are welcome to visit during the lunch hour and have lunch with their children. They must check in at the office first. In accordance with STCS Board policy, fast food or food from restaurants **ARE NOT** allowed in the elementary cafeteria. Students will not be permitted to walk home for lunch, but parents may sign a child out and back in during the lunch hour.

Our computerized system gives you the option to pay as many days in advance as you wish. Each family should have received a Free and Reduced lunch application in the mail. If you did not receive one and need one, applications are available in the school office.

Newsletters/Menus

Newsletters come home with your child the first week of every month and are also available on our website. This year menus are 3 month menus. You can also view menus on the STCS website.

Traffic and Parking

Over the summer our parking lot was repainted and traffic flow arrows added. A copy of this map is attached.

In the **morning**, one lane will be open in front of the school for drop off. This is a ***kiss and go lane***. Please drive slow and **stay in line** until it is your turn to drop off your child. Have your child ready to exit the car from the **passenger side** when you pull up to the school. For the safety of all, please have your child exit on the passenger side of the car. If you need more time

or wish to come into the school, please park in the parking lot. **No Parking is Allowed in the Drop Off Area**. The Saginaw Township Police Department is working with us to enforce these policies. At **dismissal**, the circle in front of the building will be closed to all traffic except buses. If you are picking your child up, park in the parking lot and meet your child at the appropriate exit (1st grade will exit the doors at the north end of the building, 2nd grade will exit at the main entrance, and kindergarten out the doors at the kindergarten end). There is also additional parking along Draper Street. **Children will not be allowed to enter the parking lot unless they are accompanied by an adult.** Please help to ensure the safety of all by following these policies.

Bicycle Riders

Children may ride their bikes to school. A rack is in place in front of the building. It is recommended that all bikes have locks. Once a bike is placed in the bike rack, it will be left there until school is dismissed. A crossing guard is available at the exit of the school to help students cross S. Center Road.

Emergency Forms

On the first day of school, an Emergency Form will be sent home with each student. Should your child become ill or injured at school, this form will provide us with directions of who to contact and where to contact them. It is important that this be filled out completely and returned to school the following day. Through out the year, we understand that phone numbers may change. It is very important that you keep the office updated on these changes.

Attendance Procedures

When your child is absent from school, be sure to call the office at 797-1827 and report the absence before 8:30 am. You may leave a message on the voice mail if you are calling before or after office hours. If your child is tardy or returning late from an appointment, it will be necessary for you to sign them in before going to class. **Remember, if your child comes in after 8:05 a.m. it is considered a half day absence.** Please send a note to your child's teacher if you wish to pick up your child during the school day. If someone other than you will be picking up your child, be sure that we have **written permission on file**. We will ask for picture identification. It will be necessary for you or the person picking up your child to come to the office to sign them out. Teachers will not release a child without permission from the office. A child will be released only to the parent with custody rights. If there are problems concerning custody, please see the principal. **A copy of legal custody papers must be in the child's school file.**

School Supplies

Although we provide school supplies at school, many parents have asked us to give ideas for purchasing their child's own supplies. Each grade level has a list posted on the Westdale website.

Dress Code

The school laws of the State of Michigan require a student to attend school in appropriate dress. Unacceptable for school are tank tops, cutoffs, short skirts and shorts, bare midriffs (stomachs & belly buttons), hats in school, and clothing bearing objectionable words or pictures. All students

must wear footwear to school. Sandals can be worn to school but for safety reasons students will be asked to change into tennis shoes for outdoor recess and gym class. **For safety and sanitary reasons, rubber flip flops are not allowed to be worn to school at all.** Tennis shoes are required for gym class.

Mark Clothing

Please mark your child's first and last name on all their belongings including coats, hats, boots, backpacks, etc.

Medication

STCS Board of Education has a district wide medication policy. We encourage medications to be given at home. However, if your child needs to be given medication (prescription or over the counter (even aspirin and cough drops)) during school hours, **it will be necessary for you and your doctor to fill out the proper consent forms.** These forms are in the office and must be filled out every year. To avoid confusion on the first day of school, please be sure to return the completed consent forms and bring the medication by Thursday, August 28th. The school office is now open daily from 8 am- 3:30 pm.

Visits to Westdale

Visits by parents, grandparents, guardians, etc. are welcomed at school. In accordance with STCS Board policy visits must be arranged in advanced with the classroom teacher. Class begins at 7:45 am and at that time we ask parents to leave the building so instruction can begin. If you need to talk with teachers please do so before classes begin in the morning or after classes end in the afternoon. For the safety of everyone and in compliance with district policy, all visitors **must sign in, in the office and wear a visitor's badge.**

Volunteering

To protect the safety and welfare of our students and staff, it is now required for all volunteers to complete a background check. We have attached a form that you will need to complete and return to the Westdale office. When you return the form we will need your Michigan Driver's License or State Identification to make a photocopy of. This information will all be forwarded to the Superintendent's Office for the background check to be completed. This form must be completed every school year and before you will be allowed to volunteer.

Food & Drink in the Rooms

In all elementary schools, in order to preserve this new flooring and prevent stains, we have established new and more stringent rules for food and drinks in the classroom. After several meetings with our custodial department, we are asking for your help and support in following these new procedures:

- Morning Snack time- No red drinks (juice, pop, Gatorade, etc.). Clear drinks are okay. Fruit, and dry food such as granola bars, "goldfish", graham or other cracker products that produce only crumbs are okay because they can be easily vacuumed up.
- Party or birthday treats- same rules as above. If you furnish cupcakes or cookies please make sure they have **white** frosting. The colored frosting stains easily and the stains are very difficult to remove from clothing and carpeting.

Birthdays

Treats are welcome to celebrate your child's birthday. We ask that you keep it **short and simple** as to not take away from classroom learning time. Packaged items are the best choice for treats. If you choose to send a treat for your child's birthday, please send just enough for the class. Please refrain from sending extras to pass out to other people in the school. Unfortunately, it takes too much time from the classroom day and also creates interruptions. The child is invited to come to the office to receive a birthday treat immediately following morning announcements. To avoid hurt feelings, we ask that you not hand out birthday party invitations at school.

Recess

Recess is held everyday following lunch. During wet or extremely cold weather, recess is held inside. Parents who request that their child be excused from recess must supply a doctor's note.

Closing of School

If a decision is made to close the schools due to bad weather conditions or any reason, STCS will send out a phone call to each family. Also, local radio and TV stations will broadcast such information.

Child Care

Westdale House is an After School Activity Club that is in the Westdale gym. Students must be registered to participate. Westdale House also participates in the free 30 Minute after school program. This program is only open to Westdale students who have a sibling in another STCS elementary school or the high school. Both programs require pre-registration. Call Community Education at 797-1847 for details.

Picture Day

School Picture Day is scheduled for Tuesday, September 16th. Ordering information will come home with your child during the first week of school.

Student Insurance

Voluntary student accident insurance is being offered to parents of students at STCS through First Agency, Inc. Parents/guardians wishing to purchase this optional student insurance are responsible for submitting their application and premium using one of the following options:

1. By mail to:

First Agency, Inc.
5071 West H Avenue
Kalamazoo, MI 49009-8501

(Applications are available in the office)

2. Through the First Agency, Inc. website www.1stAgency.com

Go to "Find Your School"; select the state and insert "Saginaw Township" in Box 2, then select "Go"

From there, you can download and print the brochure/enrollment form and enroll via mail or online with credit card.

Completed claim forms are to be mailed along with itemized medical bills to First Agency, Inc. by the parents/guardians in the event of a covered accident.

Back to School Routines:

With many Michigan schools beginning soon, it's important to help kids return to a normal sleep routine and start the school year off right.

To give your kids the best start, don't wait until the last minute to adjust their sleeping habits. The key to creating an effective sleep schedule is through gradual transition. Incorporate small changes over the next weeks to make going to sleep less stressful for both you and your kids.

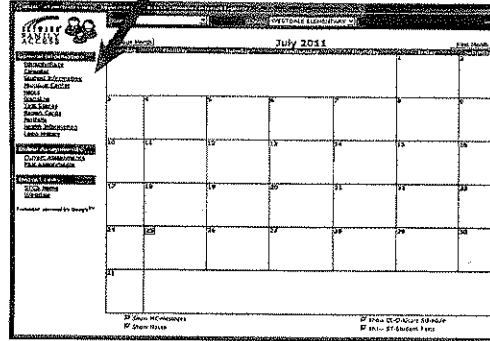
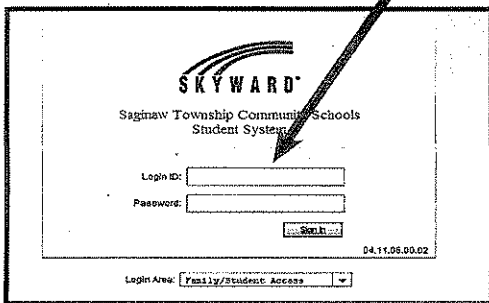
Try adding these tips into your nightly routine:

- The 15-minutes rule:** About two weeks before school starts, try backing up bedtime every night by fifteen minutes. By taking off little bits of time, kids can begin winding down earlier without a curfew shock.
- Encourage calm activities:** Before bedtime, encourage activities that will help settle them down for the evening. Reading is a great way to quiet the house and get kids prepared for schoolwork in the coming weeks. Yoga is also a great activity to promote relaxation.
- Limit caffeine:** Keep sugary and caffeinated beverages out of your kid's schedule at least 6 hours before bedtime. Caffeine is a stimulant and blocks sleep-inducing chemicals, which brings a sleepless night for the whole family.
- Keep it dark:** Beginning at dinnertime, start darkening the house by turning lights off and closing blinds. Remember, Michigan sunsets begin around 8:30 p.m. in August, so it might take a little extra time and effort to keep the sun at bay in time for bed. These late sunsets are exactly why room darkening can help to cue the neurochemicals that make kids feel sleepy even when it may still be bright outside.
- Pull the plug:** Turn off electronics at least a half hour before bedtime. TV screens, iPads and computers all produce unnatural light, which can throw off your body's natural sleep cycle by inhibiting melatonin production.

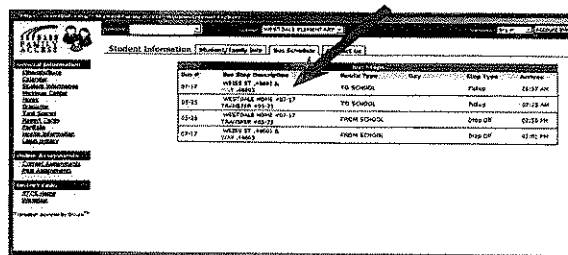
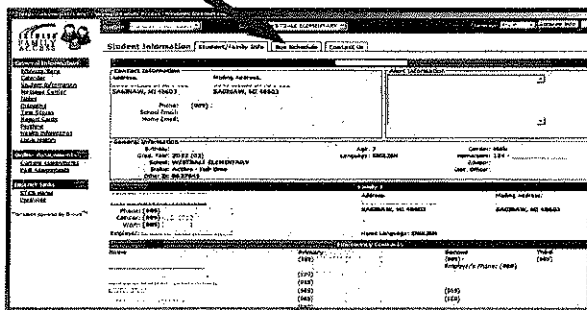
Busing

**Eligible for Busing?
Five Steps to find out what Bus your Child Rides!**

1. Go to the district's web site: www.stcs.org. Click on the in the top navigation bar Link labeled "Family Access"
2. Login to Family Access (below). If you do not have a login, please call your child's school and they will give you one.
3. When the new window opens, click on the link labeled "Student Information."



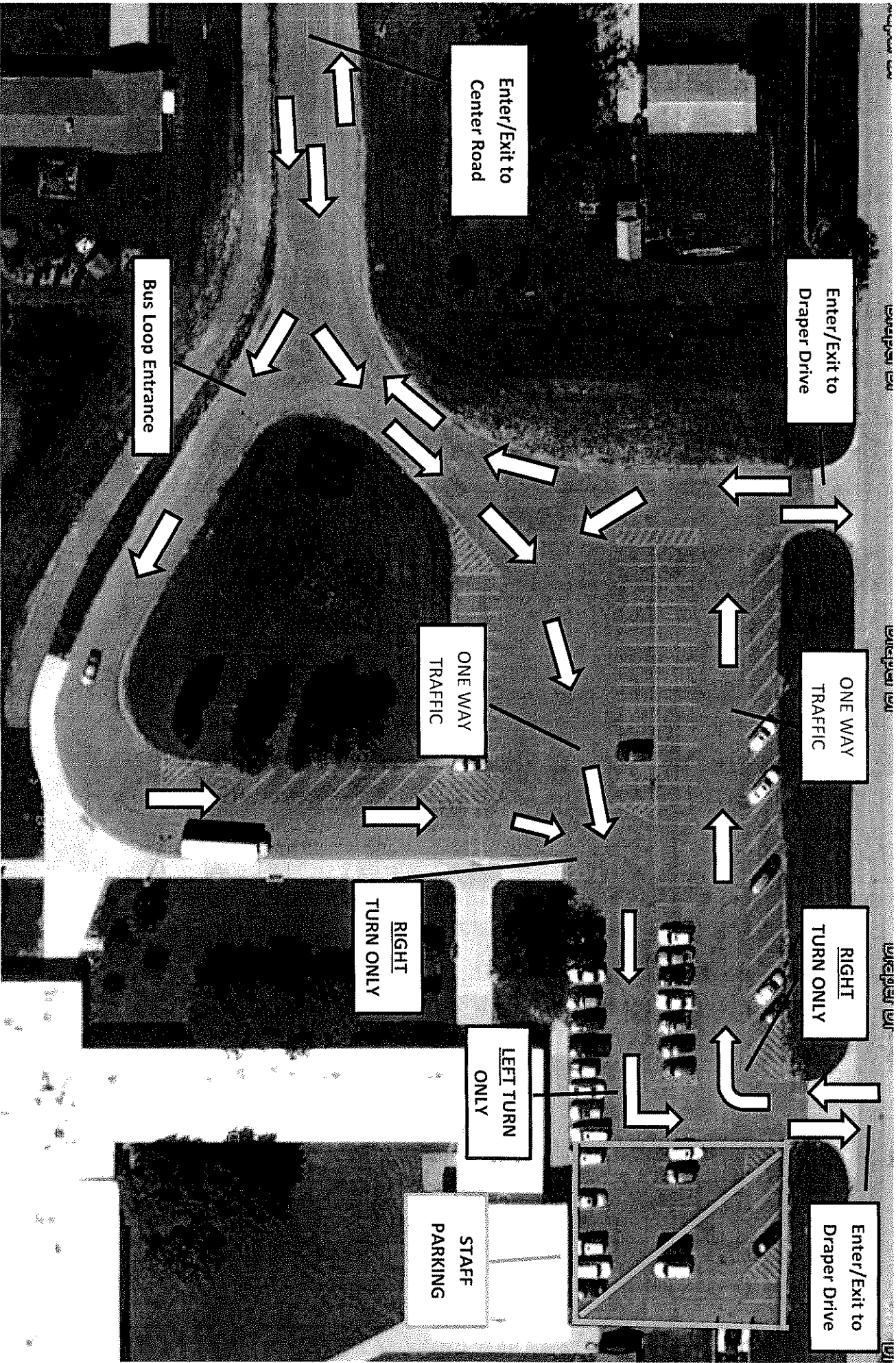
4. When the new window opens, click on the tab at the top labeled "Bus Schedule."
5. When the new window opens, your child's bus schedule information pops up, including transfer information.



On behalf of the Westdale staff, I want to wish a warm welcome to our new families and welcome back to our present families. We are looking forward to another fantastic school year.

See you on September 2nd!

Karen M. Volk
Westdale Elementary Principal



Westdale Parking Lot Traffic Flow Map